GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3417
ANSWERED ON:05.08.2016
Death Due to Climate Change
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Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware of the assessment made by World Health Organization (WHO) regarding increase in the deaths each year world-wide by 2030 due to climate change and if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether India is likely to undergo the agony in a big way on account of increasing incidence of malaria, diarrhoea, heat stress and under-nutrition and if so, the reaction of the Government thereto;

(c) whether WHO has proposed adoption of a new approach of linking health economics assessment and climate change and issued advisory to various countries including India for increased health spending to counter diseases induced by climate change; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the steps/ measures taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
(SMT. ANUPRIYA PATEL)

(a): As informed by World Health Organization (WHO), human actions are causing significant changes to the global climate system. These are creating observed consequences for environmental and social conditions across all continents. As many of the largest health concerns are strongly influenced by weather and climate conditions, this inevitably presents risks for human health. A report has been published by WHO regarding quantitative risk assessment of the effects of climate change on selected causes of death in 2030 and 2050. This report summarizes the potential impact of climate change on health metrics and attributable mortality for two future time periods: 2030 and 2050. The assessment is an advance on previous studies, but it is still constrained by limited quantitative information about, and understanding of causal mechanisms linking climate with health impacts on a global and local scale. No assessment has been made on the current burden of disease due to observed climate change (warming since the 1960s) (WHO, 2009a). Directorate General of Health Services have further informed that the above study estimates that approximately 2, 50, 000 additional deaths may occur due to climate change per year between 2030 and 2050.

(b): WHO has informed that the global effect of climate change on the world is likely to affect India as well and add to the existing burden on these problems. The Prime Minister's Council on climate change, at its first meeting held on 19 January 2015, approved a new Mission on Health under National Action Plan on Climate Change.

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has constituted a National Expert Group on Climate Change and Health in July 2015. The terms of reference are to prepare an Action Plan for mitigating effects of environment and climate change on human health in India and recommend strategies for mitigating adverse effects of climate change on human health with capacity building, coordination and Monitoring & Evaluation mechanisms.

(c) & (d): In May 2016, the Executive Board of World Health Assembly considered an update on climate change and health in light of agreements reached by the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. This conference concluded that new and more coherent approaches to climate change action were needed to aligning objectives of economic development with those of environmental protection, and with health and human wellbeing. Among the recommendations were three, aimed at developing a new approach to link health, economics and climate change as follows:

I. Articulate a coherent approach to climate change, health, and economics that includes the concept of natural capital and environmental health externalities, and could help policy makers to access the health gains and health savings from climate action.

II. Engage across relevant organizations to develop a comprehensive international assessment of the economic costs associated with the health effects of climate change under different scenarios of adaptation and mitigation action and/or inaction, including effects on the health sector itself, as well as valuing health externalities on optimum decisions in other sectors. This should include an assessment of the additional investment that will be required to ensure health resilience to climate change as part of universal health coverage.

III. Provide countries with the means for conducting such assessments of their Nationally Determined Contributions under the UNFCCC, particularly to equip countries to include evaluation of health within their internal cost−benefit analyses of the policies or technology choices to meet their commitments on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

WHO is working with countries to raise awareness, advocacy levels and capacity development and initiating pilots on the adaptation of health to climate change in Member States. A comprehensive training package on health and climate change has been developed for countries in the South-east Asia region. Most Member States have established focal points for health and climate in their ministries of health.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change published a report titled "Climate Change in India, A4X4 Assessment- A Sectoral and Regional Analysis for 2030s" in November 2010. The report has assessed impacts of climate change on four key sectors of Indian economy namely Agriculture, Water, Natural Ecosystems &biodiversity and Health in four climate sensitive regions in India, namely Himalayan region, Western Ghats, Coastal areas and the North-East region. In health terms the report has projected spread of Malaria in new areas.